

**COASTAL IMPACT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
(CIAP)
FY 2007
Tier I**

1. PROJECT TITLE: Baytree Freshwater Diversion Property Purchase Project
2. ENTITY NOMINATING THE PROJECT: St. James Parish Council
3. CONTACT INFORMATION: Mr. Jody Chenier
St. James Parish Council
P. O. Box 106
Convent, LA 70723
Ph: (225) 562-2262
jody.chenier@stjamesla.com
4. TOTAL CIAP FUNDS REQUESTED: \$378,000
5. PARISH CIAP FUNDS REQUESTED: \$378,000
6. STATE CIAP FUNDS REQUESTED: None
7. INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDS PROPOSED: None
8. DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION OF PROJECT: The St. James Parish Council intends to purchase a tract of land extending from the Mississippi River to the Parish Canal in order to secure the required property for a future freshwater diversion. This project is proposed to purchase approximately 63 acres of existing agriculture and wetland areas in order to accommodate a proposed freshwater siphon project.

The tract of land would allow a siphon and depository canal to be built at the Mississippi River at Section 47 and continue through Section 49, located in T-11-S, R-16-E. The canal would allow a freshwater river siphon to discharge freshwater from the Mississippi River to the Parish cross-cut canal, then into Bayou Chevreuil and, finally, Lac Des Allemands. The purchase of this tract will provide a straight line canal to feed freshwater into the upper Barataria Basin system. The freshwater will provide needed nutrients and sediments that would enhance wetland restoration and improve water quality. The diversion will take advantage of natural topographic and hydrologic features to re-establish input of basic resources and circulation.

This area would target the upper section of the Barataria Basin, which continues to experience wetland destruction due to poor water quality and lack of fresh nutrients needed to sustain an existing wetland area. This area's freshwater source was cut off when the Mississippi River levees were constructed in the 1940's; and, consequently, the existing wetland continued to deteriorate and subside.

9. PROJECT TYPE: Mitigation of damage to fresh, wildlife, and natural resources.
10. PROJECT JUSTIFICATION: The purpose of this project is to purchase the necessary property needed to construct a small freshwater diversion approximately 200-400 cfs into the Bayou Chevreuil wetlands area. The project is to address the wetland loss and poor water quality that plagues this area due to its isolation from a continual freshwater source. The project will improve habitat for wildlife and fisheries by increasing the flow of freshwater into the wetland areas through a managed outfall system. One of the issues that complicates the development of such a system is land rights and availability of property. The Parish plans to use these funds to purchase the necessary tract of land needed to allow the project to be constructed without future delays due to land and property issues. The proposed project was part of the Coast 2050 initiative and was included in the State's master plan of restoration strategies for the Louisiana coast. Once the property is owned by the Parish, the Parish is prepared to team up with the State to proceed with designs and construction for a small siphon system for this area.
11. PROJECT COST SHARE (NON-CIAP FUNDS): The Parish will use its own equipment and labor to clear the agriculture property and install property markers for future land use. Additionally, the Parish will work to secure the necessary permits to clear the remaining wooded areas needed to proceed with design and construction drawings to expedite the construction of the siphon system. It is estimated to take approximately 28 days to clean and clear the property once purchased. The equipment cost associated with the work is estimated to be \$40,000 and would be provided by the Parish through in-kind labor and equipment.